

Remarks

The Office Action mailed October 14, 2005 has been carefully considered, and Applicants' counsel offers the following remarks.

Attached to the October 14, 2005 Office Action is an Information Disclosure Statement by Applicant stamped received on August 7, 2000 with notations that the foreign references are missing. Attached is a copy of the postcard (also date stamped August 7, 2000) submitted with that Information Disclosure Statement stamped by the OIPE confirming that 92 references were received by the USPTO. Out of caution, we are resubmitting the foreign references marked "missing."

The Office Action rejects claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter. In particular the Examiner finds the recitation "(the) product exhibits a superior centrifuge retention capacity property" is not clear. This recitation has been deleted from claim 1. Withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

The Office Action provisionally rejects claims 1-6 and 20-22 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-29 of copending application No 10/301,929. Copending application has issued into US Patent No. 6,841,229 and was a division of application No 09/602,852 and has priority of Provisional Application No 60/141,412. The present application has priority from Provisional Application No. 60/141,412, the same as the issued '229 patent from the copending application. A terminal disclaimer is filed herewith (Appendix A) to remove this rejection under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting

The Office Action provisionally rejects claims 1-6 and 20-22 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-29 of copending application No 11/052,331. Copending application 11/052,331 has priority of Provisional Application No 60/141,412. The present application has priority from Provisional Application No. 60/141,412, the same as the copending application No 11/052,331. A terminal disclaimer is filed herewith (Appendix B) to remove this rejection under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting

The Office Action rejects claims 1-6 and 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Woodrum (US 5,997,690) newly cited. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that Woodrum teaches the production of a web by a wet-laid process that includes an ion sensitive superabsorbent polymer (SAP), fibers, and a salt dissolved in the water carrier. Also, the Office Action points out the paragraph bridging column 3 and 4 for the neutralization of the polymer.

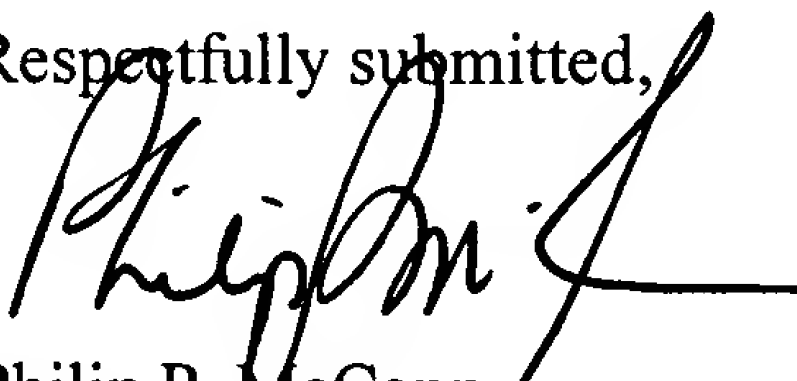
The present invention is directed towards a water sorptive product comprising a wet-laid web of particulate pre-superabsorbent polymer (pre-SAP), neutralization agent, fiber, and water, as disclosed in the present application. The particulate pre-superabsorbent polymer is partially neutralized by neutralizing the polymer after mixing the polymer with the fiber and water during the wet-laid process of making a web, wherein the degree of neutralization of the SAP is partial, and preferably less than about 80 mol %.

Woodrum does not disclose or suggest a water sorptive product comprising a wet-laid web of particulate pre-superabsorbent polymer (pre-SAP), neutralization agent, fiber, and water, as set forth in claims 1-6 and 20-22 of the present application. Woodrum discloses a superabsorbent polymer particle impregnated fibrous structure including an ion sensitive SAP

having a particle size of less than 250 microns, wood pulp fibers and cellulose acetate fibers, that is made by a wet laid process. Woodrum fails to disclose a water sorbtive product including a pre-superabsorbent and a neutralizing agent as set forth in the present claims. Not only does Woodrum fail to teach a water sorbtive product including a neutralizing agent, Woodrum at column 4, lines 2-5, teaches including a salt such as sodium sulfate since carbonates have the effect of further neutralizing the SAP. Based on this, Woodrum would teach away from including a neutralizing agent, as required by the present invention.

In view of the forgoing amendments and remarks, allowance of claims 1-6 and 20-22 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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January 17, 2006

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